

## Carpal Tunnel Syndrome – Option Grid

At Healthshare we encourage a shared decision making process involving you, the patient in the treatment most appropriate for your condition. The option grid below is based on current evidence.

Frequently Asked Questions	Splinting and Exercises	Local Steroid Injection	Surgery
What does this treatment involve?	A splint holds your wrist in a neutral position to reduce the pressure on the nerve. It is used for 6-8 weeks. *1	A small amount of steroid is injected into your wrist to reduce swelling and pressure on the nerve *2	Surgery is done on the palm side of your wrist. Tissue is cut to reduce pressure on the nerve. This is typically a day case procedure.
For whom does this treatment work best?	For mild to moderate symptoms, most typically experienced through the night.	For mild to moderate symptoms, most typically experienced through the night.	Surgery is the most effective treatment for moderate to severe symptoms. *3
What are the advantages of this treatment?	Least invasive, least expensive easy to apply and safe	Convenient, can be done in normal clinic appointment. Symptom relief for up to 4 months.	Surgery provides long term improvement for about 95% of patients *3
What are the disadvantages of this treatment?	Wearing a splint may limit function. Relief is often for a short period	Injections provide relief but the problem may come back	You may need to stop working for a few weeks. For more chronic presentations the nerve may be too damaged to recover and you may continue with weakness and numbness.
Are there any risks?	No	Problems are rare. A possible flare in pain plus symptoms of numbness and a temporary tingling sensation.	Up to 5% may have some remaining problems. Sometimes the pain, weakness and sensation may persist or worsen *3
How long before I can use my hand again?	No delay	You can usually return to work the day of the injection.	Typically it takes 10 days or more until you have sutures removed.
How soon do the symptoms come back after this treatment?	Depending on your severity you may be symptom free for up to 3 months or more.	You may experience symptom relief for up to 4 months or more.	Symptoms do not come back very often.

### References:

- 1 – Muller M, Tsui D, Schnurr R, Biddulph-Deisroth L, Hard J, MacDermid J C. Effectiveness of hand therapy interventions in primary management of carpal tunnel syndrome: a systematic review. *Journal of Hand Therapy* 2004; 17(2): 210-228
- 2 – Stark H, Amirfeyz R. Cochrane corner: local corticosteroid injection for carpal tunnel syndrome. *Journal of Hand Surgery. British and European volume* 2013; 38(8): 911-914
- 3 - Shi Q, MacDermid JC. Is surgical intervention more effective than non-surgical treatment for carpal tunnel syndrome? A systematic review. *Journal of Orthopaedic Surgery* 2011; 6: 17